

**Best Beginnings Advisory Council  
Meeting Minutes  
September 28-29, 2011**

**Meeting Minutes: September 28, 2011**

**Welcome and Formal Introductions**

Debbie Hansen welcomed everyone to the table. Advisory Council members introduced themselves and shared what they felt has had the biggest impact on the lives of young children, age 0-5, and their families in Montana in the last 5 – 10 years. Issues mentioned include economic changes, professional development, progress, relationships, focus on the family, increased need, increased awareness, focus on all children, collaboration, compensation, struggle, importance of 0 to 3, brain development, nutrition, access to service, choices, balancing work and family, user friendly access for families, and needs.

Hank Hudson, on behalf of DPHHS Director Anna Whiting Sorrell, welcomed everyone to the Advisory Council. He shared the importance of supporting children 0 to 5, encouraged the work of the Council and thanked everyone for being here.

**Housekeeping**

Council will meet three times a year unless Council decides otherwise. Next meeting date will be decided tomorrow. Question about committee meetings- meeting location/occurrence can be determined by committees.

**Review Council Operating Assumptions**

Reviewed, discussed, and agreed to ground rules of Best Beginnings Advisory Council (BBAC). Jamie Palagi noted the importance of having representation at BBAC meetings if individuals are unable to attend. Clarification of volunteer and ex-officio members- ex officio members are included in consensus; difference is that ex officio members can be asked for advice and also receive advice. Consensus guidance included in packet. Contact information will be provided after meeting. Council meeting dates and locations are public information and posted on the state of Montana website.

**Presentation -Jamie Palagi; Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief**

*"The purpose of the Federal Early Learning Council Grant and Montana's plan for the Best Beginnings Advisory Council"*

SEE POWERPOINT

**History of Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS)-Mary Jane Standaert; Head Start State Collaboration Director**

Mary Jane Standaert provided an overview on the history of the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grant and the Head Start State Collaboration grant activities over the last 10 years. The purpose of these two systems building grants is to support collaboration and coordination of services across the broader early childhood system. Much has been accomplished over the years regarding effort to bring people together to focus on this important opportunity from a Future Search gathering in 2000 and the evolution to the Best Beginning Advisory Council now.

**Presentation and Discussion-** Jennifer Calder/Kids Count Bureau of Business and Economic Research- University of Montana

SEE POWERPOINT

Scan was of 25 government programs within DPHHS and OPI; intended to be a starting place for needs assessment.

Discussion focused on the value of and challenges associated with needs assessments- such as: keeping morale up, time and energy required, info drilled down to local level versus broad level of info, needs assessed daily informally with parents receiving services, tools like Survey Monkey, provides perception of services to non-users of services (e.g., legislators, funders, etc.), how do we decide the best tool(s) to use for needs assessment? Is it equal data?

Discussion continued and focused on what communication from the state would be valuable in collaborative work, day to day work? Information about what each agency does, contact info- who does what?, especially in terms easily understood by parents; more info on 211 and outreach on 211's services; Jamie Palagi noted that this is currently a topic on the table of DPHHS. United Way Answer Book is another resource available to connect individuals to services. Deborah Neuman suggested an Angie's List for Families, which could be addressed at a community level. John Filz noted that services are more limited in rural communities (e.g., no pediatrician in Ravalli County). Sara Groves noted the importance of librarians and their connection to their communities in a way that allows them to share resources; individuals without computers rely on libraries to be connected. Christy Hill Larson noted the difficulty in navigating the DPHHS website- many bureaus have different layouts, there is difficulty in locating needed information.

### **Community Councils and State Council- Intersection, Alignment, and Support**

Jamie noted Karen Ray Consulting will be attending the January meeting to work with both the state council and community councils. Federal requirements- needs assessment and strategic plan must be completed by Sept. 2012. Cindy O'Dell asked about the makeup of the community councils; this information will be available at the January meeting. State council needs to consider what kind of consistent information is needed? Where should there be latitude? At January meeting, there will be information on other needs assessments that have been done. The council funding is not about services but about infrastructure for services for children and families. Bob Runkel wondered about inclusion of rural communities and support for those communities.

### **Discussion of the following questions:**

#### **"What does the state council hope to gain from community councils?"**

- Information about what's going on in our communities
- Services available
- What does and does not work with services
- Reports, info- format for that
- Local needs
- Carry comprehensive communication to community councils
- Service providers, etc. will feel more comfortable working within their community and working at a statewide level- create a bridge of need and communication

- Data- both qualitative and quantitative
- Opportunities for joint planning- state and communities, community to community
- Reaching out to more communities (rural)
- Create local relationships
- Are there overlap of services?
- Ask councils to map comprehensive services in each community- partnerships, practices, programs, etc. (How are things done in each community?)
- How do agencies mix?
- How are rural communities getting needs met without resources available? What barriers are present?
- Explore sustainability of community councils
- Relationships
- Leadership

#### **“What can we learn from the Community Councils?”**

- Learn how to best serve communities by learning how they communicate within their own community
- What’s working and makes sense?
- Innovation
- Who is on community councils? (Council membership)
- Ask Community Councils the same questions as these; who serves who (state councils and community councils)

#### **“What do community councils need and want from the state?”**

- Guidance around needs assessment
- Funding to assist sustainability piece
- Expansion to other communities
- Consistency of methodology for needs assessment
- Their voices will be heard and supported
- Technical assistance
- Data
- Provide more information on state work, what can be changed at state level, how changes can be made
- Help with evaluation

#### **Lessons learned from past endeavors linking community efforts to Statewide understanding**

- Need for clarity in definitions and terms so terms and phrases are equally understood
- After needs assessment, then what?
- Sustainability- do community councils see themselves as valuable?

#### **Reports, Discussion and Announcements**

**Denise Higgins- Maternal and Child Health Bureau funding-** Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting in partnership with the Maternal and Child Health block grant; funding from Health Resources Services Administration- in second year of grant -assessment of communities (counties); identified the most at-risk counties in the state- most have or are part of a reservation, have high Medicaid population, low SES, high dropout rates- using information, ranked 33 communities as being at most risk. Funding put towards home visiting program.

DPHHS received a development grant for \$3.2 million in two years- grant was written to partner with BBAC; supports infrastructure in 25 targeted communities and sustainability. Money is being provided to support BBAC needs assessment and projects stemming from it, supporting local coordinators, capacity building. Work with local health departments and their home visiting piece.

**Terri Barclay-** reported on OPI's \$ 7.6 million Striving Reader's Grant- guaranteed funding for year one; receive \$7.6 million each year for potentially three years; info on OPI website.

Comprehensive statewide literacy plan allowed MT to be eligible for Striving for Reader's grant. Have the early literacy grant- preschools; School Readiness grant allows for subgrantees Head start, school districts, early head start- 15% must go to early childhood. Grant writing training Nov. 2 in Helena, also through ITV, can be watched through live-feed; tentative training Nov 1 or 3 in Great Falls. Needs assessment is part of grant; subgrantee will conduct needs assessment and then write grant on how to use money to correct or support their current activities in area of literacy. No specific curriculum required but proven best practices are. More info will be available at grant writing workshops. Debbie Hansen will get information out about the grant.

#### **Kelly Hart**

Healthy Montana Teen Parent Project through Early Childhood Services Bureau. Program works to support services provided to pregnant and parenting teens, with 50% of funding specifically going to American Indian teens around the state. Currently works with six contractors, will host a conference in November to support work in tribal communities.

#### **Sara Groves**

Ready to Read- early literacy project; funded through federal government. Conducted a needs assessment of libraries for services for early literacy programming. Goal is to increase services provided by libraries. 85% of libraries in state will be providing early childhood programming. Purchasing board books to libraries for infants and toddlers; provide trainings on early childhood at every state library conference to support librarians. First Interstate Bank provided funding for training of 45 librarians to attend 3-day training on science education, behaviors, outreach and messaging to parents, how to interject with parents and model behavior.

Partnership with Fish, Wildlife and Parks- "Growing Up Wild" trunks- example- bear trunk has bear hide, skull, paw prints; each trunk has books about bears, puppets- will be increasing the number of trunks available.

First library play space- play area for kids; launched first in Bozeman and will be rolling them out to other libraries. Includes seven life skills important for development based on the book, "Mind in the Making" focusing on accessible spaces. Funding came from Dennis and Phyllis J. Washington Foundation.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No members of the public were present.

## **Meeting Minutes September 29, 2011**

### **Welcome Back**

Linda Snedigar welcomed and thanked everyone for being here. Debbie Hansen reviewed the four principle objectives, which will be addressed by the committees. Reflections were shared from yesterday's meeting.

### **Presentation**

*"Montana State University Early Childhood Project Career Development Advisory Board as the PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE"*

Jamie Palagi – Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief

Libby Hancock – Director Early Childhood Project

SEE POWERPOINT

### **Committees:**

#### **1. Professional Development**

Connected to:

- Montana Early Care and Education Career Development Advisory Board
- Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium
- OPI Early Childhood Partnership for Professional Development (ECPD)

#### **2. High Quality Early Care and Education**

- Take on similar role to the former Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council Quality Committee.

#### **3. Supporting Families**

Connected to:

- Family Support Advisory Council (Part C)
- OPI Part B of IDEA

#### **4. Health and Social Emotional Health**

Connected to:

- Systems of Care work group (SOCS)
- OPI Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI)

#### **5. Strategic Communications, Outreach, Public Awareness (*will take on the role of the former Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council Public Policy Committee*)**

Connected to:

- DPHHS BB Strategic Communications
- State Workforce Investment Bureau (SWIB) (ad hoc)
- MECI (ad hoc)

Discussion of professional development in early childhood- home visiting requirements (e.g., skills, education, experiences) with Family and Community Health Bureau; shared in-service training opportunities; effectiveness of professionals; bringing training to providers instead of providers to trainers where appropriate; parents also need professional development. Deborah Neuman noted that

parent education programs are missing from the Advisory Council. Colette Box noted the need for medical providers to also be represented.

### **Individual Committees Goals and Objectives Report Out:**

#### Strategic Communications, Outreach, Public Awareness Committee

Ad hoc members to include: a marketing person, public health person, parent education/parent support person, and a legislator. Missing: is there a budget for outreach? There may be potential funders to help with messaging. There are a lot of messages for parents but not all are positive- need for strength based marketing campaign. Most messaging is geared towards parents and caregivers, but others should also be included in messaging. Jamie Palagi noted community councils have more latitude to affect decision makers due to the nature of BBAC being advisory to the executive branch and not an advocacy lobbying body. Audiences for messaging: parents/caregivers, professionals, decision makers, health care professionals, funders, quality assurance division. Will try to set up meeting via Skype to continue work outside of Council. Would like to develop strategy on changing language of day care to child care in Montana Child Care Act.

Becky Fleming Siebenaler noted that those changes have been attempted at the legislative level but legislative attorneys need to understand the importance of changing the language. DPHHS supports those changes but they cannot be made without support from legislative attorneys.

#### Supporting Families Committee

Getting input from families and focus on non-professional aspects is important as is including families in work of BBAC. Hope to do a survey of families receiving services to be able to understand how to best support families- identify gaps in all services. Would like to understand CSEFEL better- need for committee education. Ad hoc committee members: rural families, how to include bars, churches, mom's groups, providers of support services, HMK. Evaluate international models of early childhood/family support programs. Hope to bring honesty, voice of families to BBAC. Importance of social marketing. Include peer mentoring/peer educating. Will set up conference call.

#### Professional Development

Ad hoc members- mental health representative, OPI Part B, child care resource and referral person, family support. Many objectives are included with other groups. Specialized areas of professional development- infant/toddler, early childhood mental health, home visiting, director development, credentialing for family support specialists, school age children. Worked to revise objectives.

#### Health and Social Emotional Health

Developed work out of objectives; looking forward to hearing from community councils to be able to support them; may want to include tribal health and other tribal representatives, mental health representatives. VISTA at MCH can support dental work. Will review NAPA guidelines. Offer parent CSEFEL models to committees, local councils and receive feedback on how that is working. Will communicate via email.

#### High Quality Early Care and Education

Discussed where parents are in the process. Ad hoc members- adult basic education opportunities, parent education. Will work on other topics in addition to objectives (e.g., background checks, services for children with special needs). What is going on with child development assessments? Include

educational component on STARS program. Include parents as ad hoc members; include parents in discussions for policy, etc. Work will intersect with Professional Development Committee. Will check in with one another for next steps.

## **Assets for Independence (AFI)**

**Karen Heisler**

SEE POWERPOINT AND HANDOUTS

### **Wrap up**

Good to have presentation at different point in agenda. AFI next steps is to provide activities for the Family Support committee.

Report out from community council representatives:

Early childhood coalition of greater Helena area- formed over last 5-6 years; over last year has developed government structure w/ bylaws, board. Accomplishments: Baby and Me support group at St. Peter's Hospital; focus on birth to age 1 and has speakers on various topics. Coordinate distribution of book bags with books for literacy support. Fiscal agent is City-County Health Dept. in coordination with local school district.

Missoula council- formed in 1996; have worked on book kits for home visitors and child care providers, just finishing a transitions project w/ two elementary schools in Missoula- schools determined activities to make transition to kindergarten more successful, targeted kindergarten registration. Planning on introducing CSEFEL into community. Fiscal agent is the county.

Ravalli Co.- 1, 2, 3, and best of me; began in 2006 Childhood Summit. Focus on oral health, family literacy project, business education.

Gallatin Co- began in 2006; was action oriented- the Baby Fair has been a signature event held at the library- includes community agencies. Will hire a 32 hour/week coordinator. Fiscal agent is greater Gallatin united way.

Eastern Montana- Glendive, Sidney, and Miles City combined; previous activities include bags with books, resources given at a screening event. The three communities collaborate together and have a coordinator. Fiscal agent is Dawson County Community College. The three together are a new formation.

Kalispell- newly formed council with coordinator; 22 organizations committed to the council. Fiscal agent is Nurturing Center.

Butte- small council- 5 members initially involved. Activities: Kindergarten screening, literacy packets for child care providers, kindergarten, early Head Start. Now have many organizations interested in council. Fiscal agent is the local R&R.

### Next Meeting date:

Week of January 11 and 12 - will be confirmed with Karen Rey and will be sent out at a later date.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No one from the public attended.

## **UPDATE FROM DEBBIE:**

**January 9: 2:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

- Karen Ray to meet with Best Beginning Community Council Coordinators and other interested community council members. Collaboration 101 presentation. Group dinner, Q & A period, Speed dating for community councils.

**January 10: 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (Coordinators only)**

- Best Beginning Community Council meeting facilitated by Karen Ray.

**January 11: 8:30 a.m.**

- Best Beginning Community Council Coordinators to work with Karen Ray to prepare for Best Beginnings Advisory Council meeting.

**January 11: 10:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

- Best Beginnings Advisory Council Meeting

**January 12: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

- Best Beginnings Advisory Council Meeting

### **PLEASE NOTE\*\***

Times for the Best Beginnings Advisory Council meeting could change. You will get an official agenda the closer we come to the dates. The changes will be minimal.

